



**Steps to  
Togetherness**  
Scotland & England



**Norfolk**  
County Council

# Building Connections in Norfolk



Civil Society  
Consulting



COMMUNITY  
FUND

# 1. Introduction

**Civil Society Consulting CIC** (CSC), **Community Action Norfolk** (CAN) and **Norfolk County Council** (NCC) delivered Capacity Building workshops to 35 grassroots voluntary and community sector (VCS) organisations and statutory professionals in Norfolk (**Appendix 3**). Over two half-mornings, participants deepened their expertise and fostered a shared understanding of loneliness, whilst building lasting relationships. Through the workshops, participants co-produced a Norfolk-wide **strategic approach** to tackling loneliness. This report summarises key findings and notable conclusions that emerged from discussions and presents a **shared vision for Norfolk**.

## a. The backstory .....

Across the UK, people are experiencing isolation and loneliness, which is having a negative impact on health, equalities and social cohesion. In response, **Civil Society Consulting** (CSC) has launched [32 Steps to Togetherness](#), aiming to support and leverage the VCS (Voluntary and Community Sector) to build connections within and between communities (see **Appendix 1** for more information about 32 Steps).

As part of this Lottery-funded initiative, CSC is delivering its Building Connections Workshops (formerly 'the loneliness reduction training programme') with partners in four areas of England (including Tees Valley, Northern Manchester and Stoke). The course was developed in partnership with the **Campaign to End Loneliness' (CtEL)** in 2020 and is designed to: increase understanding of loneliness; inspire and equip participants to develop loneliness initiatives; and catalyse a bottom-up, yet systemic approach by strengthening relationships between the 'cogs' in the 'tackling loneliness machine'. It was [piloted with great success](#) in West Norfolk in 2023 (along with six other areas).

**Community Action Norfolk** (CAN) engages an extensive network of VCS organisations in Norfolk and has been actively trying to reduce loneliness in the county through their Social Isolation and Loneliness support project. They also do this by offering support to VCS organisations. CAN first engaged with the loneliness reduction training through their Community Development Officer, Andrea, who participated in the pilot in Norfolk

**Norfolk County Council** (NCC) is seeking a coordinated approach to tackling loneliness and building connections, while steering clear of a top-down or 'one size fits all' approach. NCC has been looking to gather community intelligence to gain greater clarity on the council's role, relationships, partnerships and responsibilities regarding social isolation and loneliness.

Thanks to these synergies and our mutual recognition of the central role the VCS can and should play in reducing social isolation across Norfolk, CSC, CAN and NCC partnered

to deliver the Building Connections Workshops, with the hope of coming away with a **shared vision** for Norfolk's strategic approach.

## b. About the Building Connections workshops.....

The CSC team delivered the loneliness reduction training in Norfolk to grassroots voluntary and community sector (VCS) organisations and statutory professionals recruited by CAN and NCC. The workshops took place over two half mornings:

- **Day 1:** Focused on gaining a deep understanding of loneliness conceptually and exploring the causes and effects of loneliness in Norfolk specifically.
- **Day 2:** Focused on how to catalyse a bottom-up yet coordinated and strategic approach to tackling loneliness across Norfolk, using the 'Promising Approaches Framework' (**Appendix 2**) to take a 'birds eye view', support participants to identify their role as a 'cog' in a Norfolk-wide 'tackling loneliness machine'. We had collaborative discussions about approaches and ideas, based on the new shared understanding we'd established the day before.

Working collaboratively through various exercises, the workshops sought to:

- (1) **Foster a shared understanding** of loneliness across Norfolk, reinforced by leveraging the personal and professional experiences of community leaders.
- (2) **Inspire, motivate and equip participants** to develop initiatives in their communities, by providing them with new tools, knowledge frameworks and partnership opportunities to develop/enhance their existing work.
- (3) **Strengthen relationships** within and between the two sectors.

The workshops also sought to (4) gather community intelligence on the causes of loneliness in Norfolk and how we might work together to address them, at scale and in the current context. The following section is a reflection of the kinds of discussions that happened during the workshop. It outlines the key findings and notable conclusions that underpin the shared vision later presented.

# 2. What we learned about loneliness in Norfolk

## a. The causes of loneliness

This section summarises the structural factors that participants felt contributed to high levels of loneliness across the county.

### **The pandemic has led to a change of norms:**

- Long periods of isolation have caused people to lose confidence in socialising, connecting with others, and participating in activities. This is particularly pertinent among older adults and children. Many people have become habitualised to staying indoors and not leaving their homes, further diminishing confidence to join activities. Social anxiety is also high.
- Some initiatives where people previously went to socialise and build connections have not restarted after shutting down; for example, several day centres have remained closed since the pandemic. As a result, many groups are having to start from scratch.
- Some services have changed and become less personal and impactful; for example, befriending services have lost face-to-face contact.

### **Poor transport links:\***

- As a rural area, Norfolk's weak transport links lead to isolation.
- Cost of alternative forms of transport is also a factor for many.

### **The cost-of-living crisis:**

- The cost-of-living crisis has made people cut back on the "luxury" of going out and participating in activities. Even the most 'basic' social activities now require additional funds.

### **Social divisions:\***

- Communities are socially divided, resulting in groups 'othering' each other and feeling marginalised themselves, which inhibits people's interactions with their local community.

### **The rise of remote working:**

- People are now required to work remotely, so those without an active social life miss out on those critical opportunities to interact with others in the workplace.

### **Digitalisation:**

- The shift to online information sharing is exclusionary for some; services that were once face-to-face are now digital, leaving the digitally excluded without those spaces to interact. For example, people used visits to the post office as a social opportunity.

- In the same way that hearing about crime makes people wary of their safety out and about, the rise of online scams can render older adults vulnerable, impacting who they can trust.

#### **Lack of opportunity for genuine connection: \***

- There is a perceived lack of opportunity for many people to be their authentic self. For men, toxic masculinity plays a part in this, as summarised by Paul from Menscraft [in this video](#).
- The lack of places and spaces to come together, combined with the easy access of digital, has meant there are fewer opportunities for in person interactions.

#### **Transient Housing:**

- Results in people moving frequently, making it difficult to build stable and consistent communities.
- Individuals entering residential care in locations far from their original communities and families face further isolation.
- The changing demographics, including the influx of new houses, is also contributing to this fragmentation.
- Research by Norfolk Community Foundation found that young people were reluctant to move away from home, which limited their job opportunities.

*\* Poor transport, social divisions and lack of opportunity for genuine connection have asterisks as causes that are within the VCS' sphere of influence.*

## **b. Challenges**

We explored the challenges and obstacles to reducing loneliness in Norfolk, using the Promising Approaches Framework (**Appendix 2**). As CSC puts it, a person experiencing loneliness needs to pass through an effective 'tackling loneliness machine' which identifies them, understands the causes of their loneliness, and actively supports them to access a direct solution. Weak points and challenges were identified by discussing the various 'cogs' in Norfolk's 'tackling loneliness machine'.

### Many of the causes pose further barriers to reducing loneliness, including:

- Weak transport links pose a significant challenge in enabling people to physically access activities and social opportunities.
- Deep social divisions and fragmentation within communities can discourage people from participating, including:
  - A significant political divide, particularly in areas like Great Yarmouth where a Reform MP is in place alongside Conservative and Labour district councillors.
  - Unspoken racism and a pervasive fear of difference.
- Housing prices are preventing young people from living in the same area as their relatives.
- For some people, the cost of living crisis and weak transport links pose a barrier to participating in community life.

**Lack of strong community leadership** \* is contributing towards individuals feeling overlooked, unheard, and politically disempowered.

**Spaces:** \* Norfolk is a very rural county, which has benefits in terms of available green spaces. However, there is a general lack of physical community spaces, down to several factors, including the increasing privatisation of venues, including community halls. Another challenge raised time after time in our discussions was the bureaucracy involved in managing village halls.

**Late identification:** \* The sooner someone's loneliness is identified, the easier it is to help plot their route out of loneliness and prevent them from further entrenched loneliness. Identifying people's issues too late creates more work, because issues have become more complicated. Many 'direct solutions' (see **Appendix 2**) are only viable options when people are identified as feeling lonely before it has become chronic. For instance, initiatives to support people to 'enhance existing relationships' cannot work if people's relationships have deteriorated beyond repair, and 'shifting mindsets' becomes challenging since those most in need of this shift are too difficult to reach.

### Low level of understanding loneliness creates wastage.\*

- People are often quickly labelled as "lonely and isolated" when in fact this is a symptom of underlying issues. Vice versa, people are treated for mental health issues, when the underlying cause is isolation and loneliness.
- Well-meaning groups and initiatives that over emphasise their purpose as "tackling loneliness" by bringing "lonely people" together, can further stigmatise what is an experience felt by everyone at some point in their lives and therefore deter people from attending. Focusing on different interests and activities, whilst being sensitive to individual circumstances, could have significantly more impact.
- More individuals could be identified early on by third parties (e.g. families, friends and neighbours); it's not uncommon that loneliness may be noticed first by a family member, before it's recognised by the individual, especially if that family member has a good level of understanding of loneliness. However, it's also important to recognise that whilst someone may be on their own a lot, they may not feel lonely.

### Statutory challenges:

- Many residents don't trust health and social care professionals and feel let down by 'the system'. This happens where people fall through the gaps, are put on waiting lists and don't feel they get the support they need, with mismanaged expectations.
- Some feel that an over medicalised understanding of loneliness can result in a prescriptive approach to tackling it. For example seeing a Social Prescriber though your GP practice is one port of call for people experiencing loneliness.
- Services typically address issues in isolation e.g. health, housing, benefits etc. Without taking a holistic approach, this means a person's loneliness can go unnoticed.
- Limited understanding about the nature of loneliness and isolation might contribute to inappropriate referrals and/or a poor experience being referred from one service to another.
- Advice given does not always align with available services, which means individuals can feel disappointed, confused and hopeless when they attempt to follow it.
- The risk averse nature of many statutory bodies, means there is nervousness to invest in initiatives that are difficult to measure in terms of success. A focus on outputs precludes us from really understanding outcomes.

### Funding:

- Councils are under financial pressure, meaning funding pots are decreasing.
- Funding has been inconsistent and this impacts the sustainability of initiatives. Knowledge, experience and groundwork is also lost when funding is withdrawn (even if it is later reinstated) and is often not recoverable.
- When services are underfunded, people often have to repeatedly request support, which is draining and undermines trust.
- Funding cuts place significant strain on the delivery of social isolation and loneliness support services, affecting both those who receive and provide support. Recipients face reduced service hours, longer waiting times, and stricter eligibility criteria, while providers experience understaffing, increased workloads, and negative impacts on their health, all of which exacerbates social isolation and loneliness.
- Lack of core cost and multi-year funding impacts the sustainability of VCS organisations. Instead funders tend to seek "new and innovative ideas," overlooking basic needs, and these requirements are preventing organisations from applying.
- It has been commonplace to fund the referral infrastructure at the expense of the solutions themselves (e.g. social prescribers at the expense of a direct solution like a walking group).

*\* Lack of strong community leadership, spaces, late identification and the low level of understanding loneliness have asterisks as challenges most worth addressing with the limited resources we have.*

## c. Opportunities & Strengths

There are many pockets across **Norfolk with a strong sense of community**, which puts Norfolk in a good position to tackle loneliness through the bottom-up approach advocated for by Civil Society Consulting's training. Norfolk's strong community spirit makes it easier to take a strengths-led approach to loneliness reduction: leveraging the great stuff that already exists.

Here are some of the main opportunities (and strengths that can be turned into opportunities) that emerged in the workshops:

### **Norfolk has a culture of community**

- Many towns and villages have a strong sense of community and pride of place.
- Many places have a history of high levels of community activity.

### **Community transport initiatives**

- In Thetford, 'EnABLE' are trialling the use of rickshaws to help people with mobility issues get out and about and explore the local area.

### **Volunteering as a long-term solution**

- Many people care about their local area and the people in it. For individuals experiencing transient loneliness, volunteering can be a solution. These individuals are well-placed to connect with people and create welcoming and inclusive spaces for those experiencing chronic loneliness, whilst benefiting themselves.

### **Loneliness is often triggered by predictable life events**

- Much of life is unpredictable, but we can predict key life events that often have an impact on our social life, e.g. losing one's driving licence, death of family or friends, retirement, etc.

### **Building connections through the workplace**

- There is a natural opportunity for employers and workplaces to build connections at work, or to encourage staff to socialise.
- Hybrid or online working is on the rise for many; in the case of these individuals, employers could bring in schemes to encourage their employees to participate in community activities (e.g. clocking off early on a Wednesday to volunteer at a local food bank).

### **Intergenerational initiatives**

- Different skills and knowledge sit across generations, meaning young and old have complementary strengths. There is opportunity to bring people together across generations to learn from each other and foster feelings of belonging and purpose. By leveraging the complementary strengths of different generations can transform challenges into significant opportunities.

### **Recognising the unique role of faith, religion and parish councils**

- Church spaces can be used for many activities and offer a meeting place for people not just of one faith.
- More opportunities could be generated if parish councils better communicated all the activities going on in the local area.

### **Staying connected at VCS and statutory professionals**

- Connection and togetherness energises us. The same is true for VCS and statutory professionals. There is a lot of enthusiasm for connecting with each other as VCS and statutory workers with an interest in



- tackling isolation and loneliness, and an opportunity to emphasise this in existing networks.

### **Nature-based activities**

- One of Norfolk's greatest assets is nature. Nature organisations, such as the British Trust for Ornithology (BTO) are eager to make nature more inclusive to people that have barriers accessing it. There are synergies here: organisations wanting to reduce social isolation among vulnerable populations can help BTO be more inclusive, whilst benefiting from BTO's natural assets. The same is likely to be true for other nature charities; and there is also the Norfolk Green Care Network.
- Beyond social connection, there is opportunity to better acknowledge the importance of connecting with nature, animals and wildlife, especially when it comes to supporting those who are experiencing *chronic* loneliness.

### **Libraries**

- Libraries are a community asset and natural partner - they are an existing and known community hub, and are actively looking to expand and diversify their work.

### **32 Steps to Togetherness**

- The 32 Steps to Togetherness resource contains 32 ideas for small but significant practical actions that individuals can take to build connection within and between communities. The resource can help VCS organisations across Norfolk.
- The 32 Steps to Togetherness team has capacity and will to support in a number of key ways (see section b. Considerations and suggestions from Civil Society Consulting).

# 3. Tackling Loneliness in Norfolk

## a. A shared vision

During and after the workshops, participants established **a shared vision for Norfolk's strategic approach**. Based on what came out of the workshop discussions, Civil Society Consulting drafted up an area-wide loneliness strategic approach for tackling loneliness in Norfolk, which has subsequently been reviewed collaboratively by participants.

The shared vision for a strategic approach can be characterised by **two key features**:

- (1) **A bottom-up approach**, with a 'steward the garden' model.
- (2) **Getting on the front-foot and prioritising prevention**, by stimulating a behavioural and cultural 'revolution' and enriching community life, instead of a more prescriptive and medicalised approach to 'solving'/addressing someone's loneliness, and by prioritising preventing those experiencing transient loneliness from experiencing chronic loneliness.

Specific actions include the following - grouped into **these action areas**:

1. "Watering the garden" and, in particular, what's working.
2. Promoting key narratives that reframe 'tackling loneliness', by talking about 'enhancing community life' and encouraging behavioural and cultural shifts.
3. An enabling environment for enriched community life - for VCS organisations and for community members to practise neighbourliness.
4. Extra support or home based options in some cases, designed to increase confidence and enable people to access community.

### 1. "Water the garden"

- **Support activities that are working and growing new ones including:**
  - Group activities that bring people together and help them access their authentic self.
  - Mutual aid initiatives such as the Dandy Lionesses, a network of women offering one another informal support with one another's lives.
  - Activities that leverage natural assets such as BTO's Together Through Nature project in Thetford.
- **Support organisations to enable service users to graduate on to volunteers**
  - Learn from Norfolk Community Foundations Nourishing Norfolk food hubs.

## 2. Promote key narratives that reframe loneliness as enhancing community life and encourage a behavioural and cultural shift

- **Re-frame and de-medicalise loneliness across the board**

- **Encourage positive action and behaviour change.** Reducing loneliness can be framed positively: 'we all need connection and community'. Taking action to build connection and community can be seen as a social good (rather than a way to improve individuals' health).

- **Capture and share stories in a joint, grassroots social media campaign**

- **Celebrate community** leadership, volunteering, neighbourliness and collaboration.
- **Capture stories of change** of people who have experienced chronic loneliness, to demonstrate their journey to feeling greater belonging and connectedness.
- **Inspire further nature-based initiatives and intergenerational work.**

## 3. Enabling environment for enriched community life - for VCS organisations and for community members to practise neighbourliness

- **Early identification, support at critical life stages, improved referral pathways**

- **Deepen the public's understanding of loneliness**, by promoting new narratives, destigmatising what is a normal and universal experience, and being clear on what people can do to help.
- **Support at critical life stages** by skilling people and workers to spot warning signs in the community. Work with places like estate agents, hospitals, funeral directors, and schools. Smarter use of data to identify people who could use extra support. Tailor support to those experiencing significant life events e.g. bereavement groups.
- **Continue and expand local 'help hubs'** such as the one-stop warm space where community members can get support with their problems.
- **Improve referral pathways** by deepening understanding of loneliness among workers across sectors to increase the appropriateness and effectiveness of referrals, promoting a referral experience that increases confidence and ensures that every contact counts. This might be done by leveraging the skills, knowledge and relationships of networks such as this, or through train the trainer models

- **Enable volunteer-led initiatives** amplifying the range of social activities in local places

- **Reduce barriers to smaller voluntary groups accessing support** (e.g. by covering the travel expenses for them to join training).
- **Increase the accessibility of smaller pots of funding** that can go a long way for smaller organisations.
- **Allocate funding to support with volunteer management**, as successful volunteer initiatives require some investment.
- **Facilitate the use of community spaces, e.g. village halls, so that they're easy and appealing to use**; raising awareness of library hubs and their potential role.

- **Increase visibility and accessibility of the great initiatives and activities that already exist** - enhancing online directories that residents (and organisations) can use, having friendly workers and volunteers more visible in the community.
- **Celebrate and value community leadership and volunteers.**
- **Nurture the network**
  - **Connect the connectors:** Foster relationships between organisations, activities and initiatives interested in tackling social isolation and loneliness. This could be done by supporting **participants to remain connected** through regular meetings, and a LinkedIn or WhatsApp group that facilitates ongoing communication.
  - **Explore pooling resources** i.e. a shared back office for IT, marketing, printing, communications, training, data delivery, and fundraising. Libraries or local hubs could serve as an excellent hub for these functions.
  - **Foster a culture of collaboration** by collaborating on a joint social media campaign that promotes stories of positive connection.
- **Explore, pilot and scale community-led transport initiatives:**
  - **Explore funding options for community transport initiatives** to enable people to socialise outside of their homes and in their community
  - **Learn from other community transport schemes** like the EnAble rickshaw initiative in Thetford, active transport (cycling and walking) initiatives. Solutions mentioned include eclectic bikes, volunteer drivers, buddy systems to build people's confidence and a universal ticketing system (across bus providers).

#### 4. Extra support in some cases

- **Social confidence:**
  - **Develop more intentional person centred approaches** which might mean 1-1 and face to face offers designed to build confidence and help people grow their social networks for a longer-term solution for those feeling under-confident, socially anxious and even chronically lonely and/or struggling to leave their homes.
- **Home based options**
  - **Recognise that some people cannot leave their homes** and therefore explore options to get creative with bringing social and community life to them. For example, using technology and digital inclusion (including appropriate training) to help people to meet, speak to and see others.
- **Improved referral pathways**
  - **Build confidence early** encouraging people to see what they can do themselves so that if someone is referred from a statutory service to a community initiative, instead of expecting to be 'done to', they are an active participant.
  - **Ensure efficient use of limited resources** (i.e. ensure only those who really need extra support are referred to 1-to-1/face-to-face offers or home-based solutions).

## b. Considerations and suggestions from Civil Society Consulting

The Civil Society Consulting (CSC) team has independent perspective, informed from having delivered the workshops in different areas of the UK, and has made note of the following observations for consideration, and suggestions for the initial next steps to get the Shared Vision off the ground.

### Considerations

- a. The **what** is clear, the **how** is less clear: in some action areas it's clear what needs to happen, but further discussions are needed to establish *how*. e.g. who will 'increase visibility and accessibility of the great initiatives and activities that already exist', and how?
- b. **Strong relationships** within and between both sectors are the crucial ingredient for all this to work.
- c. With resources being as tight as they are, **prioritisation** is key, including to sustain momentum among the VCS in the wake of the workshops and this report. The strategic approach indicates prioritising preventing those experiencing transient loneliness from becoming chronically lonely. Prioritising this means other things will not be prioritised. Prioritising everything means prioritising nothing, although this leads to tough decisions.
- d. It's understood that funding is the tightest it's ever been, but it remains advisable to **fund social isolation support initiatives** to save considerable money in the long-run.
- e. Two key strengths/opportunities shone through as particular opportunities in Norfolk's (not true of other areas):
  - i. **Nature**: the synergies between nature based organisations with natural assets stood out, paired with an outdoorsy population.
  - ii. **The appetite for and potential of intergenerational work**, which was regarded as having huge potential. By leveraging the complementary strengths of different generations can transform challenges into significant opportunities.
    1. For example, "*it takes a village to raise a child*": mothers and parents need support with their children, older people and empty nesters have experience raising children and a need for social connection.
    2. Similarly, young people who are technologically savvy and in need of work experience can be leveraged as volunteers.
- To bring the shared vision to life in a genuinely co-productive way it will be necessary to **establish a clear sense of everyone's role**, CSC needs to be mindful that its role is to prompt and facilitate, rather than do the doing (this will be unsustainable and undermine the principles behind the shared vision).

- *The 'steward' role is to initiate, prompt, 'water', convene, advocate, and may be best suited to Norfolk Community Foundation (as opposed to NCC).*
- *Many of the key things that need to be 'unlocked' to create an enabling environment are within the influence of the county council, district councils and parish councils (e.g. transport, village halls, communications channels). In other words, different councils are responsible for different aspects of infrastructure.*
- *With this being a VCS-led effort, we will need to clarify not just its role, but its powers/mandate.*
- *The county council's role could also be to find synergies with other statutory sector initiatives (e.g. Nutrition might be a priority in the ICS; food is a great way to bring people together/build community; the council's role could be to help bring these synergies to light and initiate discussions about how resources can be optimised.)*

## Suggested next steps:

Upon reviewing the strategic vision collaboratively, the need for a behavioural and cultural shift shone through as the long-term solution to tackling loneliness in Norfolk, with people needing to move from passive recipients to active participants. 32 Steps to Togetherness is a resource designed to be a tool to help VCS organisations help individuals do just that.

Through our grant, CSC has the resource (and enthusiasm!) to:

- **Coordinate a joint VCS-led social media campaign as per 2b:** It seems like many birds could be struck by one stone if we work together to promote a cohesive narrative via a joint social media campaign. Not only will this promote key narratives as per 2b, but collaborating on a joint social media campaign could help to 'nurture the network' by strengthening the relationships between the VCS and fostering a culture of collaboration. Key steps would be to:
  - Develop templates for each story type,
  - Deliver a film-making workshop with VCS participants (and a catch up session to any new people who didn't come to the Summer workshops),
  - Support organisations to create films.
- **Provide free short online workshops** on 'how to use 32 Steps to Togetherness in your work' and provide a bundle of printed materials for all.
- **Help to 'nurture the network' by regularly reconvening meetings** and welcoming new participants:
  - Facilitate the identification of a 'steward' to take this role forward with CAN and NCC.
  - Facilitate discussions to clarify the roles of the VCS, the 'steward', CAN and the local authority.
  - Set up an informal network, such as a Linked In page or WhatsApp group, to facilitate ongoing communication, if still desired.

We can also **deliver a condensed version of the training to statutory professionals and front-line workers** from both sectors (one of the recommendations above) via a Train the Trainers (at a discounted rate)..

# 4. Appendices

## a. Appendix 1: *about 32 Steps to Togetherness*

Civil Society Consulting CIC has recently launched a major initiative all about **building connections within and between communities**, called [32 Steps to Togetherness](#).

Over the last four and a half years, our team of non-profit consultants has supported over 250 organisations advancing **health, equality** and **social cohesion** across the UK by providing affordable or free support. We have come to realise that all the issues we work on have a shared root cause: lack of social connection and loss of community. Isolation and loneliness has a detrimental effect on individuals - it's bad for our health and erodes our self-efficacy. What's more, widespread loneliness creates the conditions for division and hate, because the symptoms of loneliness make us susceptible to divisive narratives. Social fragmentation inhibits democracy. All in all, lack of connection and community is making us unhappy, unhealthy, divided, intolerant, and disempowered.

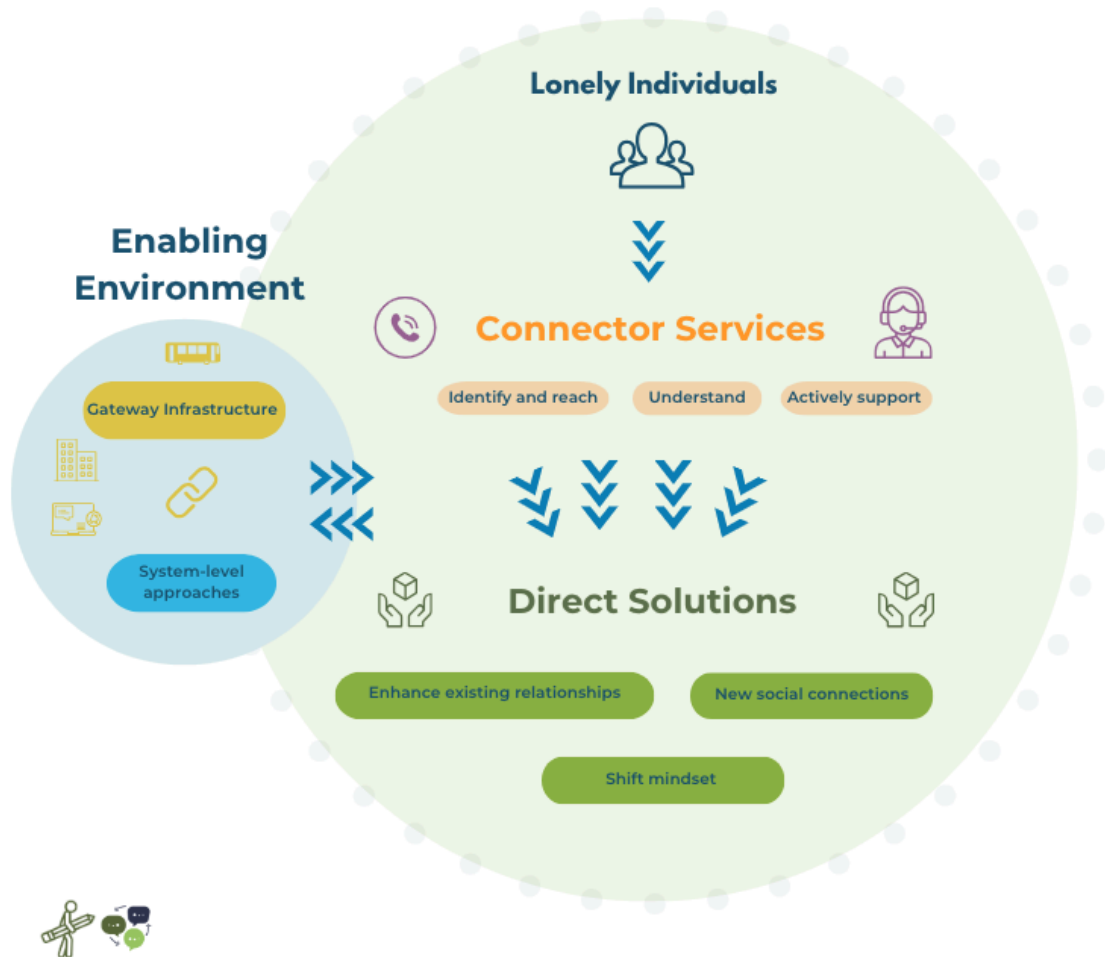
We've come up with [32 actions](#) that we can all take (as individuals and as community leaders) to build connections, first within and then between communities - it's a **practical guide** called **32 Steps to Togetherness**. [Here's a video explaining more](#). With our National Lottery Funding, we want to support, celebrate, and inspire civil society organisations that are bringing people together in their respective communities across the UK: we want to bring them together in a community of community leaders, which is united behind the 32 Steps vision and committed to sharing the 32 Steps to Togetherness guide in their respective communities.

So that's *what* we're doing, [here's how we're doing it](#):

- We provide free support to grassroots organisations (e.g. [Ubuntu Multicultural Centre](#)) - i.e. free consultancy support, leadership coaching and capacity building workshops.
- We run events ([in-person Togetherness Conferences](#)) and online discussions (such as [this one with the then Shadow Minister for Civil Society](#)).
- We are also running a national [poetry challenge](#) in partnership with Hidden Literature, Southwark Cathedral, and notable poets.
- Finally, we're coalescing an [online community](#) on our Instagram channel, sharing stories of togetherness from diverse communities across the UK (e.g. [this one about London Football School](#)).



## b. Appendix 2: *the Promising Approaches framework*



## **c. Appendix 3: *Organisations that participated in the training***

A dynamic group of 35 individuals participated representing:

**Community Action Norfolk  
The Wellbeing Service  
Norfolk County Council  
Norfolk & Suffolk Talking Therapies  
Voluntary Norfolk  
Lily & Borough Council of King's Lynn & West Norfolk  
Age UK Norfolk  
Age UK Norwich  
Creative Arts East  
Norfolk Walking For Health  
Norfolk Green Care Network  
St. Peter's Church  
Norfolk Sheds Network  
The Shoebox Enterprise  
Mens Craft  
British Trust for Ornithology  
King Street Baptist Church  
Enable Thetford  
Mens Shed  
Inclusive Norwich**